



General Assembly

January Session, 2005

Substitute Bill No. 6708

* _____ HB06708HEDAPP031605 _____ *

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE WORKFORCE READINESS OF THE
JOBS FIRST PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) The Labor Department shall
2 implement a program to enhance the employability of participants in
3 the Jobs First program administered by the Commissioner of Social
4 Services and the temporary family assistance programs. The Labor
5 Commissioner shall implement the program in conjunction with the
6 design team for the Jobs First program. For purposes of sections 1 to 4,
7 inclusive, of this act, the "Jobs First program" shall mean the
8 demonstration program entitled "Reach For Jobs First" pursuant to
9 Section 1115 of the Social Security Act. Funds appropriated pursuant
10 to section 5 of this act shall be used for:

11 (1) Supplemental assessments of Jobs First program participants and
12 other recipients of temporary family assistance who lack a high school
13 diploma, or the equivalent, or who are identified as having
14 mathematics or reading skills which are a barrier to employment at
15 wages which enable the participant and the participant's family to be
16 self-sufficient. These assessments shall be designed to determine
17 effective education, training or other action to mitigate identified
18 barriers to employment;

19 (2) Education in basic skills necessary for employment, including,

20 but not limited to, English as a second language, literacy and
21 numeracy programs, and high school completion and General
22 Education Development programs, for the Jobs First program
23 participants and other temporary family assistance recipients
24 identified as needing such education to obtain employment at wages
25 which enable the participant and the participant's family to be self-
26 sufficient. Such basic skills programs shall combine education, training
27 and work-related experience so that participants meet the federal
28 temporary assistance for needy families participation requirements.
29 Priority for funding shall be given to innovative models of adult
30 learning in the context of employment; or

31 (3) Vocational education programs that integrate basic skills
32 education for the Jobs First program participants and other temporary
33 family assistance recipients identified as needing such education to
34 obtain employment at wages that enable the participant and the
35 participant's family to be self-sufficient.

36 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) On and after July 1, 2005,
37 basic skills education shall not be included in the employment plan of
38 any new Jobs First program or temporary family assistance participant
39 until a supplemental assessment, as described in subsection (a) of
40 section 1 of this act, is completed.

41 (b) Not later than July 1, 2006, a supplemental assessment, as
42 described in subsection (a) of section 1 of this act, shall be performed
43 for participants in the Jobs First program and other recipients of
44 temporary family assistance who lack a high school diploma, or the
45 equivalent, or who are identified, prior to July 1, 2005, as having
46 mathematics or reading skills which are a barrier to employment.

47 (c) On and after July 1, 2005, basic skills education shall not be
48 included in the employment plan of any Jobs First participant unless
49 the supplemental assessment indicates that such education will
50 mitigate identified barriers to employment faced by such participant.

51 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) Programs to develop basic

52 skills, as described in subdivision (2) of section 1 of this act, and
53 vocational education programs funded pursuant to section 5 of this act
54 shall report every six months to the regional workforce development
55 boards established pursuant to section 31-3k of the general statutes, on
56 the number of Jobs First program participants who participated in
57 basic skills training and vocational education programs and attained
58 employment during or after completing the training or programs, the
59 kind of employment and pay level of the employment and the length
60 of time that the Jobs First program participant retained employment.

61 (b) Each regional workforce development board shall report
62 annually to the Labor Department and the local temporary assistance
63 for needy families council on the number of Jobs First program
64 participants in its region who participated in basic skills training and
65 vocational education programs and the number who attained
66 employment during or after completing the training or programs, the
67 kind of employment and pay level of the employment and the number
68 of participants who retained employment for three months and for six
69 months.

70 (c) Basic skills programs shall (1) provide a minimum of ten hours
71 of education or training per week; and (2) be available throughout the
72 year and at times of the day when Jobs First program participants are
73 available to participate.

74 Sec. 4. Subsection (c) of section 17b-112 of the general statutes is
75 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from*
76 *passage*):

77 (c) A family who is subject to time-limited benefits may petition the
78 Commissioner of Social Services for six-month extensions of such
79 benefits. The commissioner shall grant not more than two extensions to
80 such family who has made a good faith effort to comply with the
81 requirements of the program and despite such effort has a total family
82 income at a level below the payment standard, or has encountered
83 circumstances preventing employment including, but not limited to:

84 (1) Domestic violence or physical harm to such family's children; or (2)
85 other circumstances beyond such family's control. The commissioner
86 shall disregard ninety dollars of earned income in determining
87 applicable family income. The commissioner may grant a subsequent
88 six-month extension if each adult in the family meets one or more of
89 the following criteria: (A) The adult is precluded from engaging in
90 employment activities due to domestic violence or another reason
91 beyond the adult's control; (B) the adult has two or more substantiated
92 barriers to employment including, but not limited to, the lack of
93 available child care, substance abuse or addiction, severe mental or
94 physical health problems, one or more severe learning disabilities,
95 domestic violence or a child who has a serious physical or behavioral
96 health problem; (C) the adult is working thirty-five or more hours per
97 week, is earning at least the minimum wage and continues to earn less
98 than the family's temporary family assistance payment standard; [or]
99 (D) the adult is employed and works less than thirty-five hours per
100 week due to (i) a documented medical impairment that limits the
101 adult's hours of employment, provided the adult works the maximum
102 number of hours that the medical condition permits, or (ii) the need to
103 care for a disabled member of the adult's household, provided the
104 adult works the maximum number of hours the adult's caregiving
105 responsibilities permit; or (E) the adult is actively engaged in basic
106 skills training included in an approved employment plan for the Jobs
107 First program, which training is expected to be completed not later
108 than six months from the beginning of such training. Families
109 receiving temporary family assistance shall be notified by the
110 department of the right to petition for such extensions.
111 Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, the commissioner shall
112 not provide benefits under the state's temporary family assistance
113 program to a family that is subject to the twenty-one month benefit
114 limit and has received benefits beginning on or after October 1, 1996, if
115 such benefits result in that family's receiving more than sixty months
116 of time-limited benefits unless that family experiences domestic
117 violence, as defined in Section 402(a)(7)(B), P.L. 104-193. For the
118 purpose of calculating said sixty-month limit: (I) A month shall count

119 toward the limit if the family receives assistance for any day of the
120 month, and (II) a month in which a family receives temporary
121 assistance for needy families benefits that are issued from a jurisdiction
122 other than Connecticut shall count toward the limit.

123 Sec. 5. (*Effective July 1, 2005*) The sum of eighteen million dollars is
124 appropriated to the Labor Department, from the General Fund, for the
125 fiscal year ending June 30, 2006, for the purposes of carrying out the
126 provisions of section 1 to 3, inclusive, of this act.

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| This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections: | | |
| Section 1 | <i>from passage</i> | New section |
| Sec. 2 | <i>from passage</i> | New section |
| Sec. 3 | <i>from passage</i> | New section |
| Sec. 4 | <i>from passage</i> | 17b-112(c) |
| Sec. 5 | <i>July 1, 2005</i> | New section |

HED

Joint Favorable Subst. C/R

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